

Tax System Change Is Long Overdue

By SEN. RICHARD RICHARDS
All evidence up to now indicates pretty clearly that Los Angeles county taxpayers are right in attempting to fix responsibility for this year's increases in local taxes.

The current protest is more than the usual exasperation felt by every taxpayer at this time of year, and it poses a legitimate problem that requires the attention of every branch of government.

In fixing responsibility as between city governments and county government, it is already plain that clarification and change are called for in the system which plays the tax rate against the tax assessment. One is specific, the other is indeterminate and variable.

For example, the tax rate is specifically moved up or down by the elected members of the city councils and the board of supervisors. This rate, at least, is determined in hearings open to the public.

The assessment rate, on the other hand, is a variable over which the taxpayers have no control whatever, and about which they are able to obtain little information. It can be moved about widely, subject to no limitations in law, and apparently with no logical basis other than obtaining tax monies from one area without relevance to another area—and without balance other than the total need of meeting a total budget.

SHARP VARIATIONS
Assessments vary sharply from year to year, they vary sharply as between areas in the same county and even within the same city.

Another and additional difficulty is the gross variation in assessments as between the 58 counties in this state. This is not only unfair to local taxpayers, but it results in inequity in apportioning state benefits and money awards to counties.

A good example is in the apportionment of state aid to school districts. When one county assesses at a high rate in relation to true values, and another at a low rate, the first county pays the freight and the second county draws the benefits. We have been fighting this tendency for years, and the people of Los Angeles county have a real stake in removing these inequities once and for all.

Certainly the people of this county have a right to expect to pay no more than their fair share in any area of local taxes. They have a right to be specifically informed as to the burden they undertake when they vote for a bond issue on any level or for any service.

They have a right to be able to correctly fix responsibility for tax increases on any governmental level—and particularly to clarify the relationship between city and county responsibility. They have a right to expect the elimination of buck-passing between legislative bodies, assessing agencies and citizens study committees.

City Artists Hold Panel Discussion

A panel discussion by artists and laymen will be held on Friday, December 6, 8:20 p.m., at Sea-Aire park, 22730 Lupine dr., in Torrance, with Mayor Albert Isen as moderator.

Artists participating will be Frances Nugent, Division of Education, Los Angeles county museum; Enid Helvey, artist and teacher, chairman, Art Department, South Bay Adult school; Dr. A. J. Schneider, artist and teacher, and Donald C. Green, instructor, Art Department, El Camino college.

Laymen on the panel will be Herma Tillum, past chairman, Torrance Recreation commission, active in community affairs; Dr. M. E. Sagenkahn, past president of Accent Theater, chief technologist, Shell Chemical corporation; Judge John A. Shidler, South Bay Municipal District court, and Dick Fitzgerald, director, Torrance Chamber of Commerce.

The varied backgrounds and interests of the panel members should make an interesting discussion on the subject, "Does Modern Art Communicate . . . and With Whom?"

Paintings by the two practicing artist members of the panel, Enid Helvey and Dr. A. J. Schneider, and sculpture by Mark Whit, a member of the Torrance art group, will be on display. Questions and discussion by the audience will be invited.

This event has been arranged by the Torrance art group as a community service. The discussion is open to the public, there is no admission fee. This panel discussion will give South Bay residents an opportunity to hear experts give their opinion on this subject, as well as hearing articulate laymen asking artists questions they themselves would want to ask, said Mrs. Vicki Fenton, publicity chairman of the art group.

Refreshments will be served after the discussion.

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